

His "conscientious" scruples would have been laughed to scorn. They would have reminded him that the man who is accepted before God is the one who sweareth to his own hurt and changeth not (Ps. 15: 4;) and that no one is released from a vow simply because the keeping of it involves greater sacrifice than was intended (Lev. 19: 12; Num. 30: 2.) When one's word has been passed, nothing short of physical impossibility should prevent its fulfilment to the very letter.

But a promise that is afterwards found to involve the committal of sin is overruled by the higher obligation of obedience to God. If the promise of a minor may be disallowed by his guardian, much more is that of a creature by his Creator. Such promises are "to be repented of, not kept." Yet the consequences of failing to keep them should be borne as the penalty of rashness in making them.

III. The Martyred Prophet.

1. Thus perished the last of the prophets. A dweller in the twilight, but herald of the dawn. Of all the foolish things that Herod did, this murder was the most insane. It was as if one should smash the looking glass because it shows the wrinkles and grey hairs. *John was silenced but God still lived.* Swift retribution overtook Herod, and the agony of remorse which embittered, according to tradition, each succeeding birthday feast, was a presage of the coming penalty awaiting him at the hands of a just and holy God.

It is folly to hide our sins from conscience by sophistical excuses; it is childishness to get angry with those who denounce them to us. In speaking with another regarding a personal friend of each, a most worthy Christian man and a prominent worker in the church, the writer was told:—"I saw some years ago, that there was something wrong with our friend, and after some inquiry I guessed at the cause, and said to him, "Mr. — I hope you will not be offended at my freedom, for I am speaking in strictest confidence as one Christian brother to another—have you not been drinking too much privately lately?"

He colored up and seemed very indignant at the charge, but not very long afterwards he came to me and said: "My dear friend, I owe much to your kind warning. You were right. I did not suspect it myself, but I was rapidly becoming a drunkard. You have saved me,

and with God's help I intend never to keep liquor in my house again." He kept his resolve. Both these men have been transferred from the eldership on earth, to the company of the elders in heaven. This is the way in which a Christian takes reproof. John meant to rescue even Herod, and the warning rejected became a "savor of death unto death" to him.

2. They went and told Jesus. What else could they do? It would be useless to appeal to Cæsar for justice, or to the people for revenge. They went to the wisest and tenderest of consolers and left the matter in his hands. Let us when in trouble imitate their example.

It will do us good to tell somebody, and to whom can we better go than to One who knows all about it already. He is sure to sympathize with us and give us all the help we need. "In that he himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted."

ADDED POINTS.

1. Those who are unwilling to yield to revival influences, depreciate the agents, or ascribe all the results to emotional excitement.
2. Conscience is a fact not always reckoned on by evil doers.
3. It is easy to rebuke sin when there is no danger in doing so.
4. Murder in the heart is blood-guiltiness before God.
5. It is well to remember thankfully the beginning of each new year of one's life.
6. A man may be bold enough to stand a sneer.
7. We cannot effectively reprove sin in the cottage if we connive at it in the castle.
8. In reproof, tact is necessary as courage.
9. The hatefulness of revenge.
10. Distinguish between Herod's sorrow and true repentance.
11. Sins are gregarious. One sin is accompanied and followed by many others.
12. Compare Herod, Herodias, and John, with Abab, Jezebel, and Elijah.

THE BLACKBOARD.

The **D**ESPOTIC HEROD
DEPRAVED HERODIAS
DANCING SALOME
HEAD JOHN

Which is the Happiest Now?